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PICASSO PLAY TO BE READ AT ART MUSEUM APRIL 29

A staged reading of *Desire Caught by the Tail*, a play which Pablo Picasso wrote in four days in 1941, will be given at 8 pm on Wednesday, April 29, in Gartner Auditorium at The Cleveland Museum of Art. Reuben Silver, Professor of Theater Arts, Cleveland State University, will direct. Free tickets are available in the Museum Store.

The first of three plays written by Picasso, *Desire Caught by the Tail* was written for the amusement of his friends during the early days of World War II. The original reading in 1944, the year it was first published, was distinguished not only by quietly attracting an audience of more than a hundred--including well-known musicians, writers, and actors--during the Nazi occupation of Paris, but also by a cast that included Simone de Beauvoir, Dora Maar (Picasso's mistress at the time), Jean-Paul Sartre, and others; Albert Camus served as producer, reading stage directions from a corner of the room.

In the spirit of the play's first performance, in which music was played on a gramophone, the Museum performance will include recorded music by 20th-century French composers, in addition to Saint-Saëns' *La Danse Macabre* and other works specified in Picasso's stage directions. Slides of Picasso, his friends, and period scenes will be shown before the play. Slides of the artist's paintings will be shown throughout the performance--still lifes and other works in which the imagery of Picasso's visual art is like the literary, verbal images in his play. Appearing in this performance are: Paula Duesing, Juliette Johnson, Allen Leatherman, Andrew May, Marc Moritz, Chuck Richie, Ksenia Roshchakovsky, and Dorothy Silver.

The one-hour play's plot is loosely held together by a string of conversations, but the events reflect the appalling realities of the war years with irony. Picasso used words lavishly and outrageously, finding language as congenial a medium for his creativity as paint or metal, his sensitivity to verbal form and color giving the play the vitality of a cubist painting. Though it is about misery, discomfort, hunger, and passion, the absurdity of the play's improbable situations and characters delights the audience. *Desire Caught By the Tail* is a surrealist exploration of the poetic power of language: raunchy, capricious, and deadly serious in evoking the feelings and drama of everyday life, from wild enjoyment to annihilation.

A question and answer session will immediately follow the performance.

The performance is one of many events complementing **Picasso and Things: The Still Lives of Picasso**, a major international loan exhibition organized by the Museum in celebration of its 75th Anniversary. **Picasso and Things** is on view in Cleveland through May 3.

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